



## MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release  
Sept. 24, 2002

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### **American WWII Veterans to Testify to Congress About Veterans' Right to Sue Private Japanese Companies that Enslaved Them**

WASHINGTON—A subcommittee of the U.S. House will hold a hearing on Wednesday, Sept. 25, at 2:00 p.m. in Rayburn HOB, Room 2237 to hear testimony about the right of WWII veterans to sue the private Japanese companies that profited from the slave labor they were forced to perform as POWs. Thousands of American POWs were forced into slave labor by several Japanese companies during WWII. These ex-POWs, all now in their 70s and 80s, survived years of forced labor, beatings and starvation in Japanese-owned mines, factories, and shipyards—as POWs after Allied Forces, including over 27,000 Americans, surrendered at Bataan on April 9, 1941. Prior to the hearing, Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA), Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), and Dr. Lester Tenney, WWII Veteran and Mitsui slave laborer, will be available for media questions in Cannon HOB, Room 441 at 1 p.m. ET.

While the stories of the atrocities endured by American POWs of the Japanese during WWII are appalling, perhaps most shocking is the fact that the U.S. State Department has been opposed to the veterans' efforts to obtain recognition and compensation from these Japanese companies, rather than helping them resolve this matter. This is especially tragic given the key leadership role the United States has played recently in resolving similar claims brought by civilian slave laborers in Germany and by those whose assets were not protected by the Swiss banks during World War II.

Congressional support for the plight of these veterans has been strong and sustained. There are currently three bills (HR 1198, S 1154, and S 1272) that support the efforts of these ex-POWs. In the U.S. House, HR 1198 currently has 228 cosponsors, more than half of the membership.

**WHAT:****MEDIA AVAILABILITY ON THE RIGHT OF WWII POWS TO SUE FOR WAGES**

Before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims hearing by Chairman Gekas, R-Pa. On HR 1198 – Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA) and Dr. Lester Tenney, WWII Veteran and Mitsui slave laborer will be available for media questions.

**WHO:**

Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA)  
Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA)  
Dr. Lester Tenney, WWII Veteran, Mitsui slave laborer

**WHEN:**

Sept. 25, 2002 1:00 p.m. ET

**WHERE:**

Cannon HOB, Room 441

**AGENDA:**

HR 1198, The Justice for U.S. POWs Act, introduced in March, 2000, by Reps. Mike Honda (D-CA) and Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA).

For additional background, visit: at [www.justiceforveterans.org](http://www.justiceforveterans.org) or [www.house.gov/honda/InCongress/vets.html](http://www.house.gov/honda/InCongress/vets.html)